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Alberta Programs Status Report

Victims Programs Status Report

Grants Awarded

Applications for grants for the 1998/99 fiscal year were April 1 and October 1, 1998. Forty-five applications were evaluated by the Committee and forty-three grants totaling \$1,177,800 were approved and awarded. This

reflects an unusual benefit to the Alberta Crime Victims Compensation Program of 100% of the available funding over 1997/98. The following table summarizes the amount of grants awarded by the Alberta Crime Victims Compensation Program for the 1998/99 fiscal year. The grants are categorized by the type of organization receiving the funds. The following table summarizes the amount of grants awarded by the Alberta Crime Victims Compensation Program for the 1998/99 fiscal year. The grants are categorized by the type of organization receiving the funds.

Ministry of Justice and Alberta Crime Victims Compensation Program

VICTIMS PROGRAMS

STATUS REPORT

1998/99

GRANTS AWARDED BY TYPE

47%
\$49,500

19.5%
\$764,000



Alberta Municipal Police/Fire Services

Alberta
JUSTICE

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT

History

The *Victims' Programs Assistance Act*, proclaimed January 16, 1991, established the Victims Programs Assistance Fund and provided for the appointment of a Victims Programs Assistance Committee. The Committee was established to review grant applications submitted by groups and organizations who provide programs and services that benefit victims of crime and make recommendations respecting funding to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

The *Victims of Crime Act* (VOCA) was proclaimed August 1, 1997, for all provisions of the *Act*, except those directly associated with the delivery of financial benefits to individual victims of crime. On November 1, 1997, the financial benefits section was proclaimed. The *Act* replaces the *Victims' Programs Assistance* and *Criminal Injuries Compensation Acts* and establishes the authority to collect surcharges of 15% on provincial statute offences.

A Fund is established into which provincial and federal surcharges are collected and deposited. Section 10 of the *Act* provides for payments from the Fund. This includes grants approved by the Minister of Justice, costs incurred by the Victims of Crime Programs Committee, the Criminal Injuries Appeal Board, expenses to persons whose services are engaged by the Minister of Justice and financial benefits payable to victims of crime for injuries suffered. Salaries, benefits and other expenditures related to the administration of the *Act* are also paid from the Fund.

The *Act* includes principles respecting the treatment of victims and establishes rights for victims to obtain certain information.

An office of the Director, *Victims of Crime Act* is created. This office operates within Public Security Division, Alberta Justice and is responsible for the administration of the *Act*. Victims who do not feel they have been treated in accordance with the principles of the *Act* can obtain information from this office as to how to resolve their concerns.

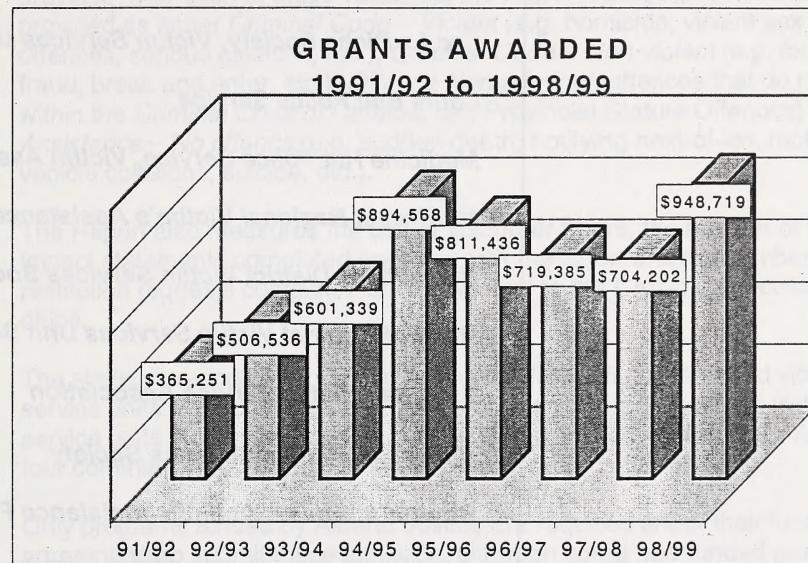
Two core programs operate under VOCA - a financial benefits program for individual victims who have suffered injury as a result of a criminal offence and a grants program that provides funding to groups and organizations offering information, assistance and support to victims during their involvement in the criminal justice process.

The *Act* establishes the Victims of Crime Programs Committee appointed by the Minister. The Committee evaluates applications for grants to programs and makes recommendations to the Minister on grant funding. Funding decisions made are based on the Committee's recommendations.

Grants Awarded

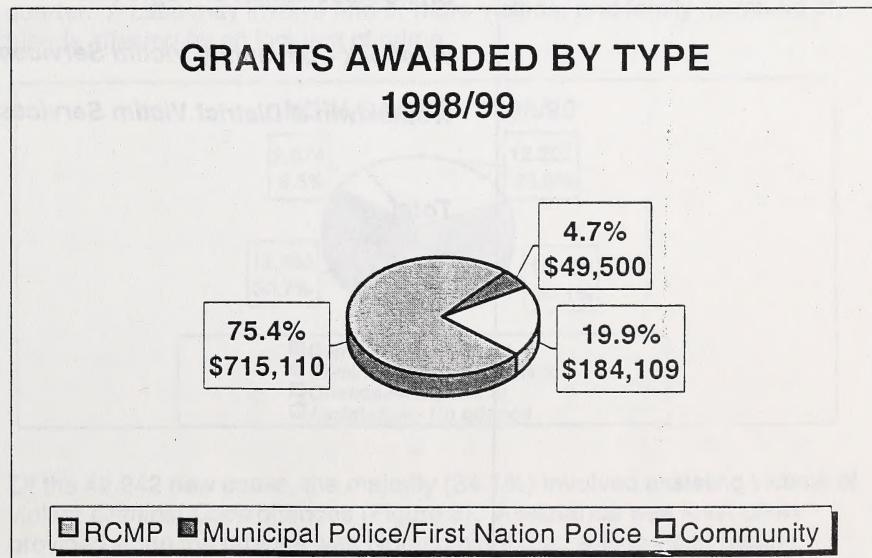
The grant application deadlines for the 1998/99 fiscal year were April 1 and October 1, 1998. Forty-five applications were evaluated by the Committee and forty-three grants totaling \$948,719 were approved and awarded. This amount represents a 35% increase in grant funding over 1997/98 (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Grants to police-based victim assistance programs accounted for 80% of the total grants allocated in 1998/99. Although police-based programs have received funding priority, other community groups and organizations that provide services to victims have also received funding.

Figure 2



The Volunteer Programs Association - Fort Saskatchewan	\$14,000
Grande Prairie & District RCMP Victims' Assistance Program Association	\$30,000
High Prairie & District RCMP Victim Assistance Society	\$30,000
Lac La Biche Society, Victim Services Unit	\$25,000
Louis Bull Police Service	\$5,000
Medicine Hat Police Service, Victim Assistance Unit	\$30,000
Northwest Regional Victim's Assistance Society (NRVAS)	\$40,000
Redwater & District Victim Services Society	\$15,000
Rocky & District Victim Services Unit Society	\$23,000
St. Albert Victim Service Association	\$22,000
Slave Lake Victim Services Society	\$25,000
Southern Alberta Victim's Assistance Program (SAVA)	\$55,000
Victim Services Society of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove & District	\$20,000
Tofield & Area Victims Services Association	\$13,000
Two Hills and Area Victim Services Society	\$12,000
Crisis Association of Vegreville	\$11,160
Westlock Community Victim Services Unit Association	\$18,000
Wetaskiwin & District Victim Services Society	\$19,150
Total	\$764,610

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Introduction

Information on the activities of victims service programs was collected using the Quarterly Report Form. The Report collects information on the number of new cases, the number of persons assisted, and the type of assistance provided. For each of these variables, the Report categorizes assistance provided as either *Criminal Code – Violent* (e.g. homicide, violent sex offences, serious assaults, etc.), *Criminal Code – Non-violent* (e.g. forgery, fraud, break and enter, etc.), *Offence Non-criminal* (offences that do not fall within the *Criminal Code of Canada*, i.e., Provincial Statute Offences) or *Assistance – No offence* (e.g. sudden death, notifying next-of-kin, motor vehicle collisions, suicide, etc.).

The Report also measures the use of volunteer hours, the number of victim impact statements completed and filed with the Court and the number of restitution requests completed and forwarded to the Crown prosecutor's office.

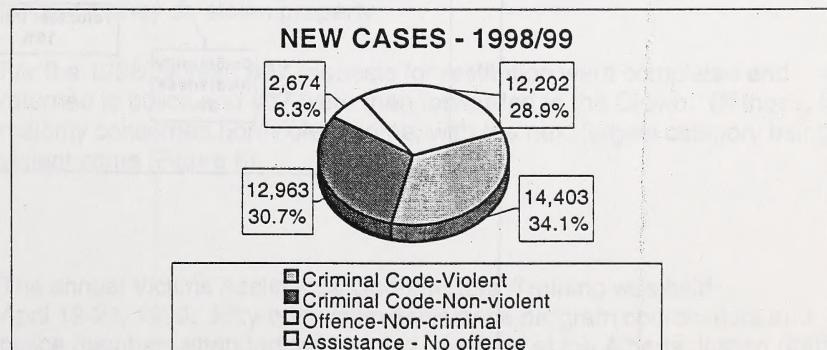
The statistics reported herein were collected from 85 police-based victim service units that submitted a full year's data and 11 police-based victim service units that submitted data for part of the 1998/99 fiscal year. As well, four community-based programs submitted statistics for that year.

Only programs funded by Alberta Justice are required under their funding agreements to submit these statistics, although some non-funded programs also submit them. Data was submitted for only part of the year in cases where units were only operational for part of the year or only funded for part of the year.

New Cases

During 1998/99 victim service programs reported handling 42,242 new cases. New cases refers to only cases (files) opened during the reporting quarter. A case may involve one or more victims, and family members or friends affected by an incident of crime.

Figure 3



Of the 42,242 new cases, the majority (34.1%) involved assisting victims of violent *Criminal Code* offences (Figure 3). Assistance was least often provided when the offence was Non-criminal (i.e., a Provincial Statute Offence).

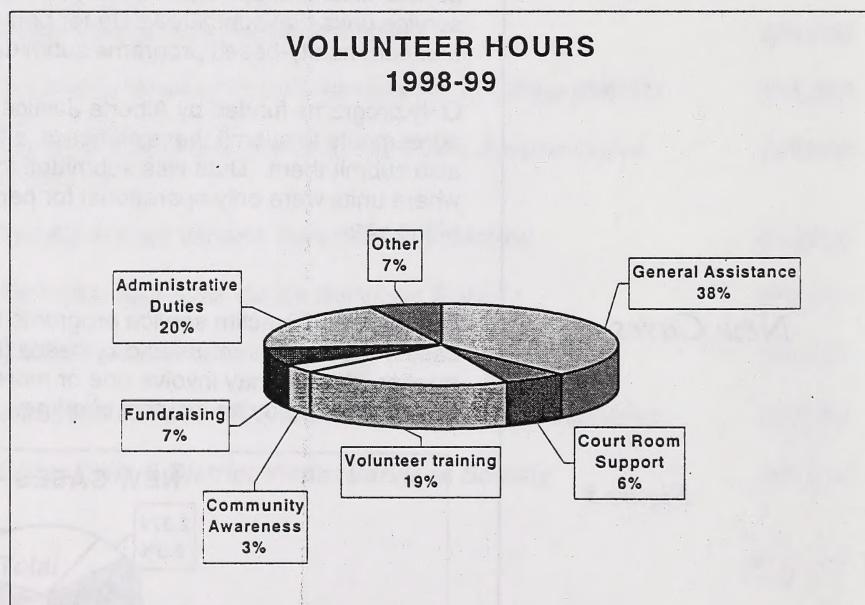
Volunteer Hours

Assistance was most often provided when the incident/offence was in the *Criminal Code – Violent*, the *Criminal Code – Non-violent* or *Assistance – No offence* categories. Assistance was least likely to be provided where the incident/offence was in the *Offence – Non-criminal* category.

In 1998/99, approximately 1,273 volunteer advocates and Board members contributed a total of 178,388 volunteer hours, which equates to 91 man-years. This figure also includes hours volunteered by program staff over and above their paid time. During the same year, programs employed 41 full-time and 46 part-time paid staff.

As would be expected, the majority (38%) of volunteers' time was spent providing general assistance (information, intervention and referrals) to victims. Twenty percent of volunteer hours were dedicated to administrative duties, followed closely by training, at 19%. The remaining hours were spent on fundraising (7%), other activities, such as meetings and travel time (7%), court room support (6%) and community awareness (3%) (Figure 6).

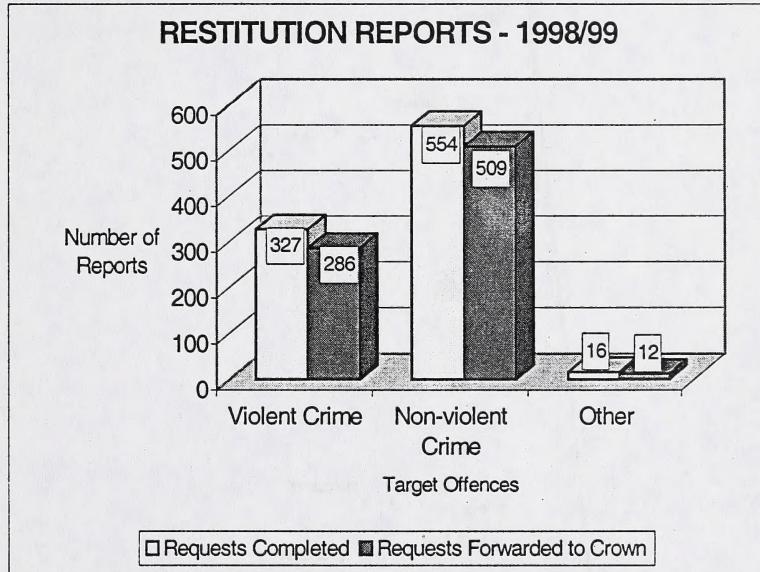
Figure 6



Restitution Program

Individuals who have suffered a financial loss as a result of a crime may be eligible to seek restitution from the offender. A crime victim may complete a Request for Restitution Form provided by the police officer investigating the case or a victim support worker. Once the form is completed, the victim returns it to police, who forward it to the Crown prosecutor. The Crown prosecutor may make the application for restitution to the Court, or may decline to do so. If the Crown declines, the victim may request the Court to do so on its own motion.

Figure 8



Restitution may be ordered for damage, destruction and loss of property, bodily harm, expenses incurred in moving out of the offender's house, as in spousal abuse cases, or for losses incurred by unknowingly purchasing or lending money on stolen property.

For the 1998/99 year, 897 requests for restitution were completed and returned to police and 807 were then forwarded to the Crown. Of these, the majority concerned non-violent crime, with the next largest category being violent crime (Figure 8).

Victims Assistance Coordinators' Training

The annual Victims Assistance Coordinators' Training was held April 19-23, 1999. Fifty-one victim assistance program coordinators and police members attended the training sessions at the Alberta Justice Staff College. Program coordinators from Saskatchewan also participated in the training.

APPENDIX A

POLICE BASED VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS 1998/1999

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